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The museum culture as a means of conjunction of the urban and rural environment

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Abstract

Nowadays, the conjunction of the urban and rural environment is one of the most critical needs and necessities of modern cities. This paper attempts to investigate the contribution of museum policies in this particular effort. A museum, as it has been proved by both international and Greek practices, can constitute a projecting space of the environment, nature, local products and daily routines as well as occupations that tend to disappear over time. By integrating elements of the natural environment, the production process of traditional and local products and even the actual agricultural products in the interior, the architectural space creates a hybrid system in which the urban built environment coexists with the agricultural landscape.

Through a retrospection of museums (Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil in Sparta, The Silk Museum in Soufli Evros, The Open Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana Arcadia, The Rooftile and Brickworks Museum N.& S. Tsalapatas in Volos, The Museum of Marble Crafts in Pirgos, on the island of Tinos and the Museum of Traditional Occupations and Environment of Stymphalia in Korinthos) which are characteristic and successful attempts in the Greek domain, the potential and the dynamics of such museum tendencies is highlighted in an attempt to bring together urban and rural elements.

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1. Introduction and background for the research

Nowadays, the conjunction of the urban and rural environment is one of the most critical needs and necessities of modern cities. The startling economic changes, the ecology issue, the reevaluation of the primary production, the scenic beauties, the civilization having as chariot the tourism but also the pursuit of the quality in life as the result of the coexistence of the city and the countryside, will function as the pivot of the economic development. Here we have to mention that the development of tourism and tourist policy in Greece, besides the publicity of the architecture of ancient times combined with the cultural events which take place in ancient theatres (Martha and Kotsaki, 2013), it is also very important the promotion of civilization through the reuse of contemporary industrial buildings.

The industrial building consists of a body of memory and culture. Donald Dudley, a professor at the University of Birmingham provided a definition for Industrial Archaeology as a discipline that investigates the industrial culture considering the industrial or technical Museum as a valid body of information associating it with both the museum space as the space of history, archeology (Maxairas 2003). Industrial archaeology is defined as the interdisciplinary study of all testimonies, tangible and intangible, of documents, artifacts, structures, human settlements and natural and urban landscapes that were created for or by industrial process (TICCIH, 2003). The industrial buildings, monuments of other eras, bearing features of city and rural place, are connected with the history, the culture and the identity of the peoples and the perpetuation of important historical and political events. "The collective memory is one of the principal elements of the city's transformation, working naturally through the society. The memory becomes the thread through all the complicated structure of the city, the architect Rossi argues (Rossi in Papadopoulos, Papakostas and Tsitiridou, 1991).

The civilization of the museums by bringing out the tradition, the world of the countryside, the natural beauty, and the local products can be the vehicle of the conjunction of the two environments.

2. The museum on the verge of rural and urban environment

"The museum composes an institution non profiteering, a permanent institution in the service of the society and its development, open to the public, an institution which acquires, preserves, researches, communicates and exposes the material and immaterial heritage of mankind and its environment for the purposes of education, study and pleasure" (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioPeriballontosStymfalias/ToMouseio.aspx>).

It is well known that the museum, a microcosm, a reflection of the picture of the social and physical world composes a space with three important functions, the documentation (recording, photographing, research), the conservation (the storage, the security) and the communication [the study, the exposition, the publication and the organization of different programs]. The combination of these three functions gives to the museums the possibility to come up to the multiple demands of the cultural and expanding administration, among these demands is the conjunction of the urban and rural environment. A museum, as proved by both international and Greek practices can constitute a projecting space of the environment, nature, local products, daily routines as well as occupations that tend to disappear over time. By integrating elements of the natural environment, the production process of traditional and local products and even the actual agricultural products in the interior, the architectural space creates a hybrid system in which the urban built environment coexists with the agricultural landscape.

The Museum of the olive and Greek olive oil in Sparta, the silk Museum in Soufli Evros, the Open Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana Arcadia, the Rooftile and Brickworks Museum Tsalapatas in Volos, the Museum of Marble Crafts in Pargos on the island of Tinos and the museum of traditional occupations and environment of Stymphalia in Korinthos], which belong to the Network of Museums of the cultural foundation of the Piraeus Bank, are characteristic and successful attempts in the Greek domain, the potential and the dynamics of such museum tendencies is highlighted in an attempt to bring together urban and rural elements. In Greece, specific heritage sites and museums usually attract attention and are advertised while more should be promoted and marketed (Kavoura and Bitsani, 2013a).

3. The Museum of Environment of Stymphalia Lake, Korinthia

Man's connection to nature as well as the modern ecological quests that result from the contemporary way of life are brought out in the Museum of Environment of Stymphalia in Stymphalia lake, in Korinthia [of the cultural Foundation of Piraeus Bank]. It is an original work, having as purpose to show the close interdependence of man and nature. It is situated on the shores of Stymphalia lake which together with the Zaria mountain, is distinguished for their high ecological value, value which is shown off through the first unity of the museum of Environment. The second unity presents the influence of the Environmental conditions to the development of the human activity and the progress of the traditional professions. The history, the folklore and the life in Stymphalia are described through art, teaching material, original digital representations and documentation films (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioPeriballontosStymfalias/ToMouseio.aspx>).

4. The Open Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana, Arcadia, Peloponissos

The Water as natural element plays a significant role in all the periods of man's life and civilization. In the Open Air Water Power Museum in Dimitsana, an entire civilization is described in an ideal way. The importance of the Water Power in the traditional society appears more important in time, as the focus is on the basic pre/ industrial techniques that utilize water for the production of different products and connect, these techniques, with the history and the daily routine of the local community through the flight of time. The open Air Water Power Museum [member of the network of the Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Bank] has restored traditional installations and water driven mechanisms which are re-established in their initial function. In the meantime the visitor tours in workrooms which are surrounded by thick vegetation and abundant running water. The museum is consisted from a traditional watermill and flour/ mill and next to them there is the little house where the miller and his family lived. Also there is the typical raki, caldron which was set up in the open air after the grape. Harvest and was used for the production of raki from the grapes [stemphila]. The museum organizes many educational programs using games and activities for schools and groups like the one "With the Power of the Water" (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioYdrokinisis/ToMouseio.aspx>).

5. The Silk Museum in Soufli Evros

The Silk museum in Soufli, Evros is put up at a renovated mansion in Soufli. It introduces the visitor to the handicraft process of breeding the silkworms and the working out of silk. Also it introduces the architectural, social and economic context of the period which made Soufli famous and in the vanguard of the silk production in Greece. The exposition continues with the evolution of the phases of the silk industry with authentic exhibits and relevant audiovisual material, always keeping and showing off the connection with the local society as well as the civilization (www.artofsilkmuseum.gr).

6. The Roof tile and Brickworks Museum, Volos

The process of producing plinths and tiles, was the motive productive activity of the city of Volos. The roof tile and Brickworks Museum is lodged in the N&S Tsalapatas Factory and shows the stages of the production. Also it gives the daily routine of the workers and the city inhabitants. The factory is one of the biggest in its kind, renovated, shows the history through the object material and the realistic models (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioPlinthokeramopoieiasTsalapata/ToMouseio.aspx>).

7. The Museum of marble crafts in Pyrgos on the island of Tinos

The museum of marble crafts in Pyrgos, Tinos presents the stages of the production of the marble from its excavation till the finishing touches. This specific process spans from ancient times till nowadays. In the permanent exposition of the museum the whole equipment and the techniques of the marble craft are presented with special

focus on the pre-industrial and industrial island of Tinos .At the same time it sets off the social and economic framework which supported the local workshops. In the many exhibits of the museum are included: mechanical equipment, works of daily use made of marble, models records but also the largest collection of the works of the most famous marble-sculptors as Giannoulis Ghalepas and Dimitrios Filippotis. The exposition is surrounded by representations of a marble quarry and of a marble sculptor's workshop. There is also a lot of audiovisual material which revives the traditional methods of the work of the quarryman and the marble sculptor who lived and worked in the island of Tinos (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioMarmarotexniasTinou/ToMouseio.aspx>).

8. The Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil in Sparta

Handiwork of the Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Group, the museum of Olive and Greek Olive Oil is situated in the space where the old Electricity Company used to be, it is the first in its Kind which was created in our country. The Olive Oil has deep roots in the Greek tradition and history and the museum of the olive and the Greek olive oil in Sparta presents in an impressive way and at the same time in a very simple one the long history of these two valuable commodities, the olive and the olive oil as well as their unbreakable connection with life in our country from ancient times until nowadays. The place where the museum is situated in the Capital of Laconia was donated to the Foundation from the municipality of the Spartans. During his tour in the museum, the visitor has the opportunity to learn sensational details for the importance of the Olive Oil and the Oil in Greece as well as its great importance in fields as the economy, the nutrition, the hygiene, the habits of worship and the folk customs. The exhibits of the museum in the open air analyze the stages of the cultivation of the olive and the gathering of the olive crop. Also three oil-presses are presented, representing three different periods of time, showing the evolution of the process. One oil press is prehistorical, the other one is of ancient times and the third one is of the Byzantine years. Each one of them can work during educational activities and programs, having as purpose that the visitor understands better the process.

The Exhibition is completed with the exhibits of the evolution of technology of the oil press in Greece from the post Byzantine year still the first half of the 20th century, this process is shown with moving models which help the visitor to understand the traditional techniques the olive oil production. Turn to account the example of other Mediterranean countries which have already made known their own production using museum initiatives and not only these, the Museum aims at the publicity of the efforts that take place in Greece in order to save the traditional technology and the elevation of the cultural role which the olive and the olive oil played during the years. Upstairs it is presented the long history and it is made known the great importance of the two products (the olive oil and the olive) for Greece, in fields like economy, nutrition, hygiene, the habits of worship and the folk customs. Downstairs it is presented the evolution of the oil press technology from the post Byzantine years till the first half of the 20th century. There are exposed, saved and restored mechanisms as well as moving models, which help the visitors to understand the traditional techniques of the olive oil production (Nasiopoulos, Sakas, Vlachos, 2014).

In the open air exposition the olive cultivation and the olive gathering are mentioned. Tree oil presses are presented one of the pre-historic years, one of the historic and one of the Byzantine years, which it is possible to work during educational activities and programs. There is also a room of multiple usages, a salesroom (where there are olive oil soaps, books, office stationery, cards and posters), and a refreshment room (<http://www.oliveoilmuseums.gr/ecportal.aspx>).

9. The Museum of Mastic in Pyrgi on the island of Chios

The under-construction museum of mastic, of the Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Group, the opening of which in the area of Pyrgi on Chios Island will be at the end of 2015, it will have a permanent exposition which will deal with the mastic of Chios as a product unique in the whole world. Its purpose is to impress the technique of the traditional cultivation, the presentation of the product, the evolution of the pre-industrial and industrial technology for the production, the exploitation and the trading of the mastic, as well as the various usages. The museum will compose a space where not only will the history of the product be known but also its great importance for the development of the local economy and its influence on the daily routine of the local inhabitants (<http://www.piop.gr/MuseumNetwork/MouseioMastixas/ToMouseio.aspx>). The local community's point of view should be taken into

consideration in regard to the promotion and advertisement of an area because at times local inhabitants may hesitate when it comes to issues of tourism development (Bitsani and Kavoura, 2014).

A remarkable effort for the conjunction of the urban with the rural element besides the museums of the Piraeus Group is the Menelaos Parlamas' museum and the Theano Metaxa-Kanakakis' collection of hand-woven materials, Piskopiano, Hersonisos, Iraklion, Crete (http://www.historical-museum.gr/files/AMMP_Piskopiano_gr.pdf).

The countryside of Crete as well as objects which are dated back to the late 19th century until the mid of the 20th century compose the main keystone of Menelaos Parlamas' museum and the Kanakakis' collection. The museum is lodged in an industrial building, made of stone, of the 19th century and residence (donations of Parlama family). It was founded from the Cretan Historical Studies' Society in 1988. The collections of the museum are presented by topics (wine-press, raki copper, oven, farming machinery, a Cretan house, a blacksmith's, a carpenter's workshop, a cooper's workshop, an olive-oil press, hand woven materials and tools for the art of weaving). In 2011 after a large renovation and extension (p.o.p Crete) the Museum acquired wings where the hand woven materials from the collection of Theano Metaxa-Kanakaki were put. Rich supervisory material and digital means offer to the visitor more information and documentation of the exhibits. The museum is easy of access to the disabled, it has a small salesroom, a wing for periodic expositions and room for relaxation.

10. To sum up

We can look for the conjunction of the rural - traditional and the urban environment analyzing the buildings themselves, the buildings where the museums are lodged at. The usual practice is the installation of the museums in buildings where in the past there was the activity of small industries. These buildings have a special architectural interest. At the same time they contribute to the preservation of the cultural memory.

The re-use of industrial monument serves social needs associated with the memory of the building and is a testimony of industrialization and a means of storytelling of the mode of production and working conditions in each period and in every place. What is on request in the industrial building (additions, demolitions) is the use of new technology to modernize, renew the form and function of, but without losing its identity (Zivas, 1988).

Not only do the traditional rural products participate in the nutritional civilization of an area, but they also express symbolic values that are kept in people's minds through centuries. It is necessary that the character and the role of these elements will be maintained in history. With the urbanization a moving of the population takes place from the countryside to the cities. This procedure did well to the societies but it was violent because it happened so quickly and it broke away to a large extent the contemporary urban societies from their past and from what it was with it, symbolically. The promotion of the process of the industrial production of a place when it is the joining element of the rural and the urban place, within the framework of a thematic museum can work as a factor to the tourist policymaking aiming to the tourist development.

The contribution of the salesrooms of the museums to this aim is great. These salesrooms, in cases, that the museums are connected with the rural production obtain another advantage: the possibility to sell products of the primary production but also the potentiality of organizing specialized restaurants in the museums, also the possibility of organizing original shows of interdrastic character and educational programs is hurled (gastronomic evenings, oenology evenings etc., as is the case with areas that are associated with wine or specific gastronomical products see for example, Bitsani and Kavoura, 2012). In these salesrooms every visitor by buying products of the museum supports a great deal the function and the institution of the museum because the salesroom contributes in its financing. Moreover the museum's salesroom gives an income bigger than the takings from the tickets.

Presupposition of the above is a high quality planning and production of the commodities, in a professional way according to the international tendencies, as it represents the museum's identity, which has visitors from all over the world. Museums and salesrooms contribute to the cultural tourism but also to the promotion of the contemporary design. Liberated or not from the collections of the museums, the visitors of the salesrooms get in touch with unique objects of high quality and aesthetics. The museums which are organized to make an effort for the conjunction of urban and rural environment as well as their salesrooms stand in between the traditional rural society and the modern urban way of life, using IT (Nasiopoulos, Sakas, Vlachos, 2014), taking the responsibility to keep the memory alive and to communicate it, enriched with modern conceptions and new approaches. Then, places could be

branded and advertised based on their distinct characteristics (Kavoura and Bitsani, 2013b). The possibilities of Greece for their development are very interesting, concerning both the quantity and the quality.

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